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ABSTRACT

The South Pacific Commission's English reading curriculum, designed to accompany and reinforce the Tate English oral skills series, is critiqued in terms of curriculum design and implementation in schools in the Micronesian region. The construction and emphases of the classroom and teacher materials are described, and an analysis is given of the texts' readability, complexity, content, and layout in comparison with those of a major basal reading series used in the United States. Deviations from the publisher's recommendations for textbook use and the instructional impact of these changes are severe. Substantial problems are also found in the design of the materials and in their recommended application in the overall language program. Suggestions are made for overall reorganization of the English reading program, improved and more accessible teacher preparation in the use of the required program and general language teaching methodology, and increased regional attention to the effectiveness of the English reading program. (MSE)

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TIME TO QUESTION THE SPC STANDARD: THE UBIQUITOUS ENGLISH READING CURRICULUM OF THE PACIFIC

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TIME TO QUESTION THE SPC STANDARD: THE UBIQUITOUS ENGLISH READING CURRICULUM OF THE PACIFIC

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The SPC reading curriculum was designed to accompany and to reinforce the oral language lessons presented in SPC's Tate Oral English program. The South Pacific Commission English Language Teaching Programme sponsored Gloria Tate's authorship of the series of 15 highly structured oral language books, and the various readers in the reading curriculum. Because of Ms. Tate's Australian origins and oecause most South Pacific school systems function in the British tradition, the materials have the feeling of British English. Because of the predominance of island themes and illustrations, the materials have the appeal of a certain visual and content relevancy to children living in Pacific environments. The oral syllabus and the reading series are used in all of the public school systems of the Micronesian Region except Guam and in most South Pacific islands. Their use in Micronesia began at least 20 years ago. Their pedagogical effectiveness has never been evaluated, although a few recent notes of concern about them have been heard from several points in the greater Pacific. In this paper, we will begin to explore the SPC reading curriculum in a descriptive manner, looking at the first evidence we have of how it is used in the classrooms of Micronesia and at some of the basic textual qualities of the materials. This exploration will not be final nor conclusive, but will begin to build our understanding of how the SPC reading curriculum impacts the development of reading skills for Micronesian students. It has already aided our attempts at making practical suggestions for strengthening reading instruction in the schools of the Region, and we expect that more comprehensive evidence will be of still greater practical import.

Tate Oral English Syllabus

The Tate oral materials teach English speaking and listening skills through "audiolingual" instructional techniques. The main focus of this approach is on carefully sequencing the order in

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which English grammatical structures are introduced and in providing drill and practice on these structures - one by one. The sequence is based on Ms. Tate's personal instructional experience, the intent being to move drill content from concrete to abstract meanings, as shown below:

1. The book is on the table. (on a flat surface)
2. The picture is on the wall. (on a vertical surface)
3. The ring is on the finger. (around something)
4. The bus is on time. (state of being)
5. We go to church on Sunday. (a specific time)
6. The house is on fire. (state of being)

These sentences are to be taught in a strictly hierarchical manner so #4 is not introduced until after # 3 is mastered, and so on. The SPC philosophical materials state that during the time that students are learning English in Grade 1, they should be learning to read in their native langauge. After they have mastered basic reading skills in the primary language, they would be thought ready to begin learning to read in the SPC reading curriculum (Klingbergs, 1985). As we shall see later, recommendations appearing in the teaching manuals and other descriptive materials of the SPC programs are not necessarily an accurate picture of how the program is implemented in the school systems of the Micronesian Region.

The SPC Reading Program

The basic reading program used in the schools of Micronesia consist of a series of nine "Junior Readers," a set of five "Alternative Readers" meshed with the Junior Readers 5-9 (5A, 6A, 7A, 8A, 9A), and a set of four "Intermediate Readers." In addition to these materials, there are various workbooks and supplementary stories. We have chosen to focus this initial analysis on the Junior Readers, the Alternative Readers, and the Intermediate Readers because these are what these researchers most often find available in classrooms as they travel throughout the Micronesian Region. Although no empirical evidence yet exists, these school and classroom visitations rarely yield evidence that the teacher manuals or the supplementary materials are widely available to or used by most classroom teachers. In fact, it is not unusual to find that teachers from several classrooms are sharing a worn set of basic readers among their collective student groups, or that one or more reader levels are either missing altogether or are in short supply.

The SPC reading materials are linked in a lock-step manner to the language structures covered in the oral language materials. Vocabulary and grammatical structures are not presented in the readers until the children have demonstrated mastery of them in the oral language materials. This design is

explained in the Oral English Handbook (Tate, 1971) in the chapter entitled, "Controlled Reading Material:"

> "If reading is to be correct, fluent, and immediately meaningful, no structural feature should be included in material for reading until it has been practised orally. Reading should be regarded as speech in print. For example, cannot should not be used in reading until can't/cannot can be shown as a contrast between the spoken and written forms."

> "For at least three years after the Pre-reading stage there should be a delay of from two months to a year in presenting in print structural features which have been learnt in the Oral English Programme."

The teacher manuals and other auxillary materials of the SPC reading program attempt to instill fear in the teacher who might contemplate moving the children through the oral language books or readers more rapidly than scheduled by the author. In discussing the type of reading which "...makes free use of any structural features the students have learnt..." in a story or other material chosen only for interest or information value, Tate (1971) warns:

> "The danger of this type lies in its occasional need to express ideas in language which goes beyond the children's understanding, even if the context makes the general meaning clear. They are likely to try to use this language themselves at other times and form habits of error."

> "Readiness for reading is of the utmost importance. Any attempt at true reading must be delayed until the pupils are ready for it - seldom before they are approaching the age of seven years."

> "The Oral English programme should control the Reading programme, and both should control the Written English programme. It is doubtful whether free composition should ever be attempted in the Primary School, as the writing of errors is of little or no value in learning. Oral preparation should precede all written work to lessen the possibility of making errors."

Grade Placement of SPC Materials

There are at least three levels of information on how SPC reading materials are used to educate students in Micronesia: 1) the descriptions and recommendations of the SPC authors and the teacher training consultants; 2) the descriptions and policy statements of central office reading or language arts specialists in each local educational agency; and 3) actual classroom use of particular levels of the SPC reading series at varying grades, at the different schools throughout the Region. Table 1 displays the SPC's recommended grade placement of the reading series, recommendations from one of the main SPC teacher training consultants in the Region, and the placements reported by the language arts specialists in four of the local Micronesian Region educational agencies. Inconsistencies between SPC author, consultant, and local specialist placement statements are obvious. Moreover, the diversity of placement arrangements reported at the local level is striking. School and classroom observations by the authors of this paper in various Micronesian Region sites persuades us that actual classroom use of SPC materials is not necessarily consistent with the planned placements reported here by local language arts specialists. However, systematic documentation of actual classroom use of these and other materials would be helpful.

Several educational implications arise from even a cursory examination of Table 1. First, the author's recommended placement would compress the use of the reading series into the first six grades. In contrast, the teacher training consultant and all responding local educational agencies reported extending SPC reader placement through at least the seventh grade, usually the eighth, and sometimes the ninth grade. In our classroom visitations we have noticed that SPC workbooks, teacher manuals, and supplementary readers are rarely used to accompany the basic SPC readers to the extent recommended by the SPC authors.

Table 1 also shows the SPC program recommending delay of English reading until grade two, a recommendation which is reiterated by the teacher training consultant. Of the four responding local educational agencies, three do not report introducing English reading until grade three. Because of the severe limitation of primary language reading materials, this delay in English reading probably means that very little reading instruction is occurring in any language at all in these classrooms until grade three. The correlate of this situation is that students in Micronesian classrooms will be unable to access written material in any of their content area subjects until grade three, or such time as sufficient English language reading skill is developed.

The observations we have just made raise a number of questions that need more careful documentation and consideration. They serve us here as a rather speculative basis for moving on to an initial examination of text features of the SPC reading

Table 1
Grade Placement of SPC Readers

Grade	SPC Recommendations(1,2)	Teacher Trainer	Pohnpei	Yap	Marshall Islands	Belau
1	Prereading Activities	Prereading o Early o Later	Prereading o Early		Prereading	Prereading
2	Junior Readers 1, 2, 3	Prereading o Advanced Junior Reader 1	Prereading o Later o Advanced	Prereading	Prereading	Junior Readers 1, 2, 3
3	Junior Readers 4, 5, 6 Alternate Readers 5A, 6A	Junior Readers 2, 3	Junior Readers 1, 2	Junior Readers 1, 2, 3	Junior Readers 1, 2, 3	Junior Readers 4, 5, 6 Alternate Readers 5A, 6A
4	Junior Readers 7, 8, 9 Alternate Readers 7A, 8A, 9A Intermediate Reader I	Junior Readers 4, 5	Junior Readers 3, 4	Junior Readers 4, 5	Junior Readers 2, 3, 4	Junior Readers 7, 8 Alternate Readers 7A, 8A
5	Intermediate Reader II, III	Junior Readers 6, 7	Junior Readers 5, 6, Alternate Readers 5A, 6A	Junior Readers 6, 7	Junior Readers 3, 4, 5, 6 Alternate Readers 5A, 6A Reader I	Junior Reader 9 Alternate Reader 9A Intermediate Reader I
6	Intermediate Reader IV	Junior Readers 8, 9	Junior Readers 7, 8 Alternate Readers 7A, 8A	Junior Readers 8, 9	Junior Readers 4, 5, 6, 7 Alternate Readers 5A, 6A, 7A	Intermediate Readers II, III
7		Intermediate Readers I, II	Junior Reader 9 Alternate Reader 9A Intermediate Reader I	Intermediate Readers I, II	Junior Readers 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 Alternate Readers 5A, 6A, 7A, 8A, 9A	Intermediate Reader IV
8		Intermediate Readers III, IV	Intermediate Readers II, III, IV	Intermediate Readers III, IV	Junior Readers 7, 8, 9 Intermediate Readers I, II	

1. SPC presents its recommendations in terms of the number of years of English instruction the student has had. We assume here that English instruction begins at grade 1.

2. Supportive supplementary readers are also suggested for some grades. Those with substantive reading text begin to be recommended at grade three and continue with new supplementary readers into grade four. Thereafter there are none. Workbooks are available at the prereading level, and to accompany Junior Readers 5 - 9 only. Teachers manuals are available for the prereading level, and Junior Readers 1 - 9 only. Some additional materials with very low verbal content are also available in the form of flip books and books which are primarily captioned pictures.

series. But before turning to that, we wish to note that the decision of where - optimally - various types of English reading materials should be introduced in Micronesian classrooms is a difficult one, and that consultants and educators who attempt to make this decision have little factual information to guide them. For example, they do not have reliable evidence on the English oral proficiencies of students of different ages and grades in any of the Micronesian local educational agencies. Further, there are many capricious variables at work within the school settings, such as widely varying teacher education and experience levels, differing degrees of availability of English books and materials, varying presence or absence of native speakers of English in the community, and different amounts and types of vernacular language books.

Research Questions

Casual inspection of the SPC readers suggests that their content is relatively less complex and substantially briefer than the commonly used basal reading series published in the United States. Since reading instruction in most Micronesian schools consists entirely of student use of the SPC materials, and since the development of reading skill is a major educational concern in the Region, it is imperative that a qualitative description of the various SPC readers be established. In this interest, the following research questions were formulated for the current study:

1. What is the readability level of each of the SPC Junior Readers, Alternative Readers, and Intermediate Readers?

2. What is the nature of text complexity in the various SPC readers, as evidenced by elements of the readability formulas?

3. How many running words are contained in each of the SPC Junior Readers, Alternative Readers, and Intermediate Readers?

4. How is the number of reading pages in each SPC reader related to the number of pages with pictures?

5. How do the SPC measures of running words compare with the number of running words in a major U.S. basal reading series?

6. How do the SPC measures of the number of reading pages and the number of pages with pictures compare with those of a major U.S. basal reading series?

Readability of SPC Series. Readability analyses were conducted on the SPC Junior Readers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9), the SPC Alternative Readers (5A, 6A, 7A, 8A, and 9A), and the Intermediate Readers (I, II, III, and IV). The readability formulas of a computerized program (MECC Utility Volume 2) were applied to the SPC reading series to compute readability levels and to assess basic features of the text. The Spache (1974), Fry (1977), and the Raygor (1977) formulas were used for materials at the fourth grade and below. The Dale-Chall (1948), the Fry, and the Raygor were used for materials at the fifth grade and higher. While the Spache is considered the most appropriate formula for grade four and lower materials, the Dale-Chall is considered the most appropriate for grade five and above. The Fry and the Raygor formulas were used to cross check the Spache and the Dale-Chall analyses. The choice of readability formulas for specific SPC readers was based on the grade placements reported by local reading specialists. Later, however, the results (combined with the publishers recommended placements) suggested that the Spache would probably have been most appropriate for all materials. Thus, Spache analyses will soon be conducted.

Almost all text in the Junior Reader 1 was analyzed, from the second page to the last page, because of the limited number of words and sentences in this level of the series. Other readers were analyzed from random selection of three passages from each reader. The first passage was chosen from the beginning of each reader (excluding the first page). The second passage was chosen from the middle pages, and the third passage was chosen from the last part of each reader (excluding the last page). Each passage analyzed contained at least 100 words. Thus, each reader was analyzed after selecting three passages, with a total of at least 300 words analyzed for each reader.

The Ginn basal reading series used for some text feature comparisons was not analyzed for readability. Instead, the publishers' recommended grade placement was used in the comparisons in this paper as proxy designations of grade level readability. Actual readability levels will be calculated in the future on these and one or more other major U.S. basal reader series.

Text Structure Analysis. The readability analyses yield a number of text structure indices, including: words of 6 or more letters, words with 3 or more syllables, average sentence length, average letters per word, average syllables per word, average number of long words per 100 words, and average number of sentences per 100 words. In addition, each reader in the SPC reading series analyzed for readability, and each of the Ginn basal readers, were analyzed for 3 simple text structure features: 1) the total number of running words in each book; 2)

the number of pages per book with reading material; and 3) the number of pages per book with pictures. The ratio of the second and third measure gives a sense of how text is blocked and broken with pictorial cues and motivation.

To arrive at the estimate of number of words per book, the following operational steps were undertaken:

1. The number of words in 10 lines were counted (including short lines);

2. This number was divided by 10 to obtain the average number of words per line;

3. The number of lines in the entire book were counted;

4. The number of lines in the book were then multiplied by the average number of words per line.

To arrive at the number of reading pages per book, every page was counted that had some reading material on it, except for pages with special purpose text (e.g., table of contents, title pages, pages entirely devoted to exercises or problems).

To arrive at the number of pages with pictures per book, every page within the reading pages, or closely associated with them, on which a picture appeared, was counted.

The text/picture ratio was obtained by dividing the number of reading pages by the number of pages with pictures on them.

RESULTS

The readability analysis data is presented in Table 2. The finding that complexity or difficulty generally increases from the first SPC reader (Junior Reader 1) to the last (Intermediate Reader IV) is supported by several indices:

1. Words of 6 or more letters generally increase across the series, ranging from a low of 32 to a high of 69, but with some high values interspersed out of order in early positions of the series (e.g., 59 at Junior Reader 5, 66 at Junior Reader 7A, 85 at Intermediate Reader II).

2. Words with 3 or more syllables generally increase across the series, ranging from 0 to 31, but with some high values interspersed out of order in early pos-

Table 2

Readability Analysis of the SPC Readers, Books 1-9A and Intermediate Readers I-IV

SPC TEXTBOOK	READABILITY COMMON VARIABLES										COMPUTERIZED READABILITY TESTS									
											SPACHE		DALE-CHALL		FRY	RAYGOR			
	# of sentences	# of words	# of syllables	words of 6 or more letters	3 or more syllable words	% of 3 or more syllable words	average sentence length	average letters per word	average syllables per word		# of words not listed	GRADE READING LEVEL	# of words not listed	GRADE READING LEVEL	GRADE READING LEVEL	average # of long words/100 words	average sentences per 100 words	GRADE READING LEVEL	Estimated Level	
Junior Reader 1	99	322	375	32	0	0	3.3	3.5	1.2		11	1.3			1.0	9.9	30.7	3.0		
Junior Reader 2	79	350	406	36	0	0	4.4	3.5	1.2		18	1.6			1.0	10.3	22.6	3.0		
Junior Reader 3	57	312	386	47	9	2.9	5.5	3.7	1.2		21	1.9			1.0	15.1	18.3	3.0		
Junior Reader 4	41	328	398	40	10	3.0	8.0	3.8	1.2		22	2.2			2.0	12.2	12.5	3.0		
Junior Reader 5	53	301	352	59	3	1	5.7	3.8	1.2				3	below 5.0	1.0	19.6	17.6	3.0		
Junior Reader 5A	36	303	383	50	7	2.3	8.4	3.8	1.3				9	below 5.0	3.0	16.5	11.9	3.0		
Junior Reader 6	53	320	401	42	5	1.6	6.0	3.8	1.3				27	5-6	2nd	13.1	16.6	AB 3rd		
Junior Reader 6A	52	326	389	48	11	3.4	6.3	3.9	1.2				8	below 5.0	1.0	14.7	16.0	AB 3rd		
Junior Reader 7	46	329	404	45	8	2.4	7.2	3.7	1.2				16	below 5.0	2.0	13.7	14.0	AB 3rd		
Junior Reader 7A	41	343	435	66	17	5.0	8.4	3.9	1.3				11	below 5.0	3.0	19.2	12.0	AB 3rd		
Junior Reader 8	52	342	404	47	1	.3	6.6	3.9	1.2				19	below 5.0	1.0	13.7	15.2	AB 3rd		
Junior Reader 8A	31	328	381	44	7	2.1	10.6	3.8	1.2				13	below 5.0	2.0	13.4	9.5	AB 3rd		
Junior Reader 9	43	332	412	60	19	5.7	7.7	4.0	.2				14	below 5.0	2.0	18.1	13.0	AB 3rd		
Junior Reader 9A	28	334	447	76	19	5.7	11.9	4.2	1.3				20	5-6	6.0	22.8	8.4	AT 5th		
Intermediate I	27	345	466	69	33	9.6	12.8	4.0	1.4				37	7-8	6.0	20.0	7.8	AT 5th		
Intermediate II	24	357	468	85	24	6.7	14.9	4.3	1.4				29	5-6	6.0	23.8	6.7	6th		
Intermediate III	28	322	421	59	19	5.9	11.5	4.0	1.3				19	5-6	5.0	18.3	8.7	AT 4th		
Intermediate IV	20	316	440	69	31	9.8	15.8	4.1	1.4				38	7-8	7.0	21.1	6.3	AT 6th		

itions of the series (e.g., 17 at Junior Reader 7A, 33 at Intermediate Reader I).

3. Average sentence length generally increases across the series, ranging from 3.3 words per sentence to 15.8 words per sentence.

4. Average number of long words per 100 words increases across the series, ranging from 9.9 to 23.8 per 100 words.

Some measures of complexity seemed to be quite low, even at the highest levels of the reading series:

1. The average number of letters per word ranged from a low of 3.5 to a high of 4.3 letters per word.

2. The average number of syllables per word ranged from a low of 1.2 to a high of 1.4 syllables per word.

On the readability scales best suited for materials at grade 4 or below, the readability levels ranged from grade 1.3 to 2.2 on the Spache, and from grade 1.0 to 2.0 on the Fry.

On the readability scales best suited for materials at grade 5 and above (Dale-Chall), the readability levels ranged from below grade 5 for Junior Readers 5 through 9, except for Junior Reader 6 which was at grade level 5-6. Junior Reader 9A, and Intermediate Readers II and III were placed at grade 5-6, with Intermediate Readers I and IV placed at grade 7-8. These were consistently ranked at lower reading levels on the Raygor: grade 3 for Junior Readers 5 through 9, with a maximum for the entire series placed at grade 6 in the analyses of Intermediate Readers II and IV. Junior Reader 9A and Intermediate Reader I were placed at the grade 5 level, and Intermediate Reader III was placed at grade 4.

Table 3 presents the number of running words analysis for the SPC series. There is a general increase in the number of running words per book across the series, although inconsistencies in order are evident. The number of running words in an SPC reader ranges from a low of 441 words in the first reader to a high of 19,059 words in the next to the last reader in the series.

Table 4 presents the number of running words analysis for the Ginn basal reader series. There is a consistent increase in the number of words per book at each advancing level, except for a 2,000 word drop between grade 4 and grade 5. The number of running words in a Ginn reader ranges from a low of 385 words at grade 1 to a high of 126,019 words at grade 8.

Table 3
Selected Hand Count Measures of SPC Text Structure

SPC Reader	Estimated Number of Words Per Reader	Ratio of Picture / Reading Pages
1	441	.90
2	1,014	.90
3	2,220	.83
4	4,391	.45
5	3,388	.42
5A	3,322	.88
6	5,719	.53
6A	2,486	1.09
7	7,353	.50
7A	5,556	.92
8	6,320	.68
8A	7,572	.82
9	7,887	.59
9A	9,936	.56
Intermediate I	17,345	.42
Intermediate II	13,468	.78
Intermediate III	19,059	.93
Intermediate IV	15,659	.78

Table 4
Selected Hand Count Measures of Ginn Text Structure

Ginn Reader	Estimated Number of Words Per Reader	Ratio of Picture/Reading Pages
1 (L2) Little Dog Laughed	385	1.03
1 (L3) Fish and Not Fish	1,188	1.28
1 (L4) Inside My Hat	1,613	1.04
1 (L5) Birds Fly, Bears Don't	5,263	1.10
1 (L6) Across the Fence	8,687	1.12
2 (L7) Glad to Meet You	15,048	1.18
2 (L8) Give Me a Clue	20,090	1.11
3 (L9) Mystery Sreaker	25,078	1.08
3 (L10) Ten Times Around	30,786	.94
4 (L11) Barefoot Island	63,984	.73
5 (L12) Ride the Sunrise	61,492	.63
6 (L13) Flights of Color	98,768	.46
7 (L14) A Road To Travel	119,468	.58
8 (L15) The World Ahead	126,019	.53

Table 3 also presents the number of reading pages, the number of pages with pictures, and the ratio of these indices for the SPC series. The ratio ranges from a high of 1.09 (Alternate Reader 6A), with a ratio of .90 for the first book in the series, to a low ratio of .42 (Junior Reader 5 and Intermediate Reader I), with a ratio of .78 for the highest reader in the series (Intermediate Reader IV). The pattern of highs and lows in the ratio of reading and picture pages is somewhat difficult to interpret. If one first views the ratios for the basic Junior Reader series, absent the Alternative Readers, it appears that the early readers have nearly a one to one reading/picture page arrangement; in contrast to the remaining readers in the basic series which seem to move to about twice as many reading pages as picture pages. However, most of the Alternate Readers have a structure approximating the one to one reading/picture page arrangement of the early readers in the basic series. This high picture content is also characteristic of the upper levels of the Intermediate Reader series.

Table 4 presents the number of reading pages, the number of pages with pictures, and the ratio of these indices for the Ginn basal reader series. In general, this entire series is characterized by high picture content. The ratio ranges from a high of 1.28 (grade 1) to a low of .46 (grade 6), ending at the highest reader with a ratio of .53 (grade 8).

Several comparative statements can be made about the SPC and the Ginn basal reader series. The maximum number of words in the 18 book set of SPC readers was 19,059, compared to the maximum number of 126,019 in the 14 book set of Ginn readers. Thus, at the highest level of the Ginn basal readers, there are 6.6 times more words than there are in the Intermediate Level III SPC reader (this next to highest level having the largest number of words in the series).

Both the SPC and the Ginn series start with a large number of pictures per reading page (basically 1 to 1). This ratio decreases more sharply for SPC than Ginn. The proportion of pictures is relatively high for Ginn even in grades 3, 4, and 5, then dropping to about 1 picture page for every 2 reading pages for grades 6 through 8. Seven of the 18 SPC readers have similarly low proportions, but the proportion reverts to relatively high levels with the Intermediate Level III.

Table 5 has been prepared as a means of summarizing some of the key variables for the SPC and the Ginn series in order to clarify the comparison. The three most striking findings are:

1. That students using Ginn materials will experience an exceedingly broader exposure to words than will those using the SPC materials;

Table 5
Summary of Key Text Structure Variables
For SPC and Ginn Reading Series

Grade	SPC (Recommended Placement)	Ginn	Readability Grade Level	Estimated Number of Words Per Book		Ratio of Picture/Reading Pages	
				SPC	GINN	SPC	GINN
1	Prereading Activities						
		Little Dog Laughed			385		1.03
		Fish and Not Fish			1,188		1.28
		Inside My Hat			1,613		1.04
		Birds Fly, Bears Don't			3,263		1.10
		Across the Fence			8,687		1.12
2	Junior Reader 1		1.3 (S)	441		.90	
	Junior Reader 2		1.6 (S)	1,014		.90	
	Junior Reader 3		1.9 (S)	2,220		.83	
		Glad To Meet You			15,049		1.18
		Give Me a Clue			20,090		1.11
3	Junior Reader 4		2.2 (S)	4,391		.45	
	Junior Reader 5		<3 (DC);1.0(F)	3,388		.42	
	Junior Reader 6		3-6(DC);2.0(F)	5,719		.53	
	Alternate Reader 5A		<3 (DC);3.0(F)	3,322		.88	
	Alternate Reader 6A		<3 (DC);1.0(F)	2,486		1.09	
		Mystery Sneaker			25,078		1.08
		Ten Times Around			30,786		.94
4	Junior Reader 7		<3 (DC);2.0(F)	7,353		.50	
	Junior Reader 8		<3 (DC);1.0(F)	6,320		.66	
	Junior Reader 9		<3 (DC);2.0(F	7,887		.59	
	Intermediate Reader I		7-8(DC);6.0(F)	17,345		.42	
	Alternate Reader 7A		<3 (DC);3.0(F)	5,556		.92	
	Alternate Reader 8A		<3 (DC);2.0(F)	7,572		.82	
	Alternate Reader 9A		3-6(DC);6.0(F)	9,936		.52	
		Barefoot Island			63,984		.73
5	Intermediate Reader II		5-6(DC);6.0(F)	13,468		.76	
	Intermediate Reader III		5-6(DC);5.0(F)	19,059		.93	
		Ride the Sunrise			61,498		.63
6	Intermediate Reader IV		7-8(DC);7.0(F)	15,659		.78	
		Flights of Color			98,768		.46
7		A Road To Travel			119,408		.58
8		The World Ahead			126,019		.53

2. That the SPC materials fluctuate in the picture/reading page ratio in a seemingly irrational way, and are more inconsistent in the ordering of total words across each successive reader than seems necessary; and,

3. That even those students being given the SPC materials at a pace recommended by the publisher (a pace not often used in actual Micronesian classrooms, we believe), and especially students in grades 1-4, will not have sufficiently complex content, as reflected by readability measures.

Discussion and Implications

Violations of Publisher Recommendations. In one or more important ways, most local educational agencies in the Micronesian Region are not using the SPC reading series as the publisher recommends. Many of the school systems delay introduction of the individual readers to one or more grades later than SPC recommends. As a result, the publisher's scheduled completion date for the Intermediate Readers in grade 6 is exceeded by Micronesian school systems by two or more grades. The introduction of English reading instruction does not begin in some Micronesian systems until grade 3, rather than in grade 2, as recommended by SPC. Although direct evidence was not presented on actual classroom use of supplementary SPC readers or on the timing and extent of vernacular language reading instruction, these two dimensions of classroom activity are believed by the researchers to be out of conformance with the expectations of the authors of the SPC readers. These researchers' observations are that supplementary readers are often not available to Micronesian classroom teachers. Further, vernacular reading instruction in Micronesia labors under severe constraints due to the inadequate supply of vernacular language reading materials, lack of resources for developing them, and due to the growing prestige of English, and the comparatively wider availability of the SPC readers.

The impact of these variances in practice from publisher recommendations are believed to be severe. Micronesian students are typically not learning to read in any language until the second or third grade. It is difficult to imagine any salutory effect of this delay. In addition, when reading is introduced to them in English, the process is usually one of submersion into a foreign language since they have not had a literacy foundation built in advance in the language they speak and comprehend and therefore could transfer into a second language. When this situation occurs, the effectiveness of the reading instruction in the second language is greatly diminished. This is readily observable in the many Micronesian reading sessions in which English reading consists of parroting, in group chorus, a page of the SPC Junior Reader selected for that grade. And, it is all

too apparent from the fact that more than 95% of Micronesian students seeking admission to the University of Guam must be placed in remedial reading classes (University of Guam, 1986a).

The finding that local reading program specialists and administrators typically do not use the SPC readers in conformance with publisher recommendations begs the question of, "Why not?" We can guess at some of the reasons. Perhaps most notably it is because the largest teacher training institution in the Micronesian Region, the University of Guam, does not teach Micronesian teachers how to use SPC materials, either in the on-campus courses or in the outreach courses to the various Micronesian islands. The instructional emphasis of UOG coursework in reading has been on methods and materials that will not be applicable to the home school sites of the teachers in training (e.g., Distar). The SPC authors and publisher representatives have not provided teacher training in Micronesia as often or as intensively as would be necessary to develop high levels of competence with the oral and reading materials of the program. Moreover, the lockstep linkage between the Tate Oral Language Materials and the SPC readers is so complex that using the full complement of materials in the recommended manner is an exceedingly complicated and difficult matter for any classroom teacher. Without full and frequent access to a specialist who could help unravel these mysteries of material use, it is likely that the average classroom teacher will make material use decisions that are out of compliance with publisher recommendations. This situation is even more likely in view of the fact that most teachers do not have ready access to the SPC teacher manuals and program descriptions.

When these researchers have talked with teachers, individuals who do much of the teacher training done with SPC materials, and locally based reading specialists about these matters, they often bring out the point that many of them do not feel their students can deal with the first readers until second or third grade, nor with advanced readers as quickly as SPC planned. Much more understanding of these attitudes and the bases for them is needed. They are sincere and reasoned judgments. Possible underlying explanations include:

1. Widespread underestimates of the innate educational and intellectual potential and ability of Micronesian children;

2. A disjunction in prevailing attitudes that early development of literacy at school is not a priority, relative to widespread community and educator goals for college level preparedness for Micronesian youth; the former attitude stemming at least in part from the traditionally oral culture of the region and its nascent socialization to literacy;

3. A lack of intensive instruction in first language literacy, even in the early grades, throughout Micronesia. This is due to many factors, including lack of direct preservice and inservice instruction of teachers in reading instruction methods applicable to the vernacular materials that they have, and conducive to expanding the quality and quantity of their vernacular materials. The results of recent years of reading research on the international and U.S. scene have not yet reached into either the teacher training domains in Micronesia, nor into the experience of local reading specialists and teachers. For example, virtually no teacher training in direct reading comprehension instruction (in either the first language or in English, the second language) has yet occurred anywhere in the Micronesian Region where the SPC materials are used. This research and the techniques for teaching reading are largely antithetical to the language acquisition theory and instructional approach embedded in the SPC materials; although it is probably quite possible to use the more recently supported instructional methods with the SPC readers if some innovation is introduced.

4. A widespread lack of knowledge among Micronesian educators about bilingual education methods, and general confusion about how vernacular oral language and literacy materials and instruction can be effectively combined with English oral language and literacy materials.

5. A concern, perhaps well-founded, among local reading specialists, administrators, and well-versed consultants for just how much in the way of complicated instructional plans and procedures can be expected to occur in the typical Micronesian classroom, given the current status of teacher degree attainment (12% of teachers in Micronesian schools - with Guam excluded - have baccalaureate degrees), and the many other constraints on the physical and educational environments of schools in this Region (University of Guam, 1986b).

SPC Readers, Even if Used as Recommended. The analyses presented in this study support the following conclusions:

1. Even if the SPC materials are used as recommended by the publisher, the number of words available to students for reading per week is severely limited. Reading research has established that the number of words read per week in either school directed or

independent reading is strongly related to reading achievement (e.g., Barr and Dreeken, 1983; Allington, 1984; Gambreel, 1984). In a study of 60 U.S. schools, Allington (1984) found that the mean number of running words per week for first graders was 400 for the students with lower skill levels and 1,100 for those with higher skill levels. At fifth grade, the number was 4,400 and 6,900 per week for low and high skill groups, respectively. The total number of words for Junior Readers 1, 2, and 3 (the materials recommended for grade 2 by SPC, with no readers used at grade 1) is 3,675. Even if Micronesian students were given 400 running words per week, as were the low skill students in Allington's study, they would have finished these three Junior Readers in nine weeks, less than half an academic year. Thus, even if used as recommended by the publisher, the SPC reading series does not offer a sufficient number of running words per unit of school time to develop the potential reading skills of Micronesian students.

2. Even at level 9 of the Junior Readers, students are being offered reading text rated at the grade 2 level. Although the local school systems of Micronesia vary in the grade placement of SPC materials, many Micronesian students will be working on grade 2 level reading materials while they are in the grade 6, 7, or higher. How can these students be expected to deal with the all-English U.S. published textbook series that they are likely to encounter in highschool, or the U.S. college textbooks they will be required to read in institutions of higher education?

3. If the SPC materials are used as recommended, their use would be concluded at the end of grade 6. Ther are no SPC oral or literacy materials for grades beyond the grade at which Intermediate Reader IV is used. We believe that this creates a confusing void for many Micronesian educational decision makers. The SPC materials are so highly structured, and espouse such an exclusionary view toward other types of materials, that once they have been finished, it is difficult to imagine how to attach other types of materials to their final levels. To introduce a U.S. textbook series for grades 7 and beyond obviously creates a disjunction in terms of readability level, number of words, and other forms of text complexity. In addition, there are dozens of possible series to select from. Which is most appropriately tagged to the end of a six year experience with SPC only? The

researchers' observation is that in many cases Micronesian educators deal with this ambiguous and confusing situation by stretching out the use of SPC materials into grades 7 and beyond, simply because they are not clear about which additional materials could or should be used next; and, often because the school system does not have the money to purchase additional materials. The overall result of these problems is that optimum development at the high school level is prevented or made difficult, and the link between high school and college for college-bound students is not adequately established.

4. If SPC recommendations are followed, English literacy would not be introduced until at least the second grade. And, as we have seen, reading instruction in any language is often not introduced until the third grade. It is important to ask, "What is the impact on the educational development of a child in Micronesian schools when reading instruction is delayed until the second or third grade?" This question must be asked with other questions about first and second language literacy instruction in mind. "What is the impact of delaying reading instruction in the first language?" "What is the impact of introducing reading in a completely foreign language before developing reading in the first language?" What is the impact of introducing reading instruction in a foreign language before reading is well established in the first language?" "What is the combined effect of delaying reading instruction in any language until the grades 2 or 3, and then impoverishing reading instruction by severely limiting the number of words and the complexity of language that is available to be read for six or more years?" We need research to help us come to grips with at least some of these questions. However, the practical educator, upon considering the situation, begins to wonder how any of the successfully educated Micronesians that we know has achieved so much under these circumstances.

Recommendations

1. The most obvious recommendations deal with grade placement, number of available reading words, and text complexity. The clear recommendations seem to be in line with those of the SPC publishers, plus what we have learned from recent reading research: 1) Begin first language instruction in a strong

and intensive whole language form from the first day of school; 2) introduce English reading when students have a first language reading foundation; 3) develop and utilize reading materials in both the first and second languages that expose students to an adequate number of words per school week, and which graduate complexity in a regular and developmentally appropriate way throughout their school careers. This will mean that local eduators in the Micronesian Region must be exposed to the options amongst supplementary English materials and English materials aimed particularly at grades 7 through 12, and provided with technical assistance and training in how to select, adapt, or develop appropriate supplementary and/or secondary level materials.

2. From all indications, ranging from informal discussions and conference panels of Micronesian educators, to financial statements of the Micronesian political entities following the compacts of free association, the SPC oral and reading materials will be permanent fixtures in the Region for many years to come. Beginning with this assumption, it is critical that the teacher training programs that serve the Region, of which the University of Guam has the largest enrollment, undertake systematic planning and implementation of courses in reading which teach how SPC reading materials may best be used to develop reading comprehension, and how they may be profitably supplemented with additional materials of greater complexity and word content.

3. In the future, especially now that the auterity of the post-compact period has materialized, teacher education at sites away from the local Micronesian site will be impossibly expensive for many if not most Micronesian teachers (at both the preservice and inservice levels). The University of Guam is currently investigating options for developing a distance education program for the Region. Distance education courses in reading instruction methods that combine appropriate use of SPC materials, first language literacy, and direct instruction in reading comprehension skills and strategies would be a welcome program offering, and could be a justifiable priority for numerous reasons.

4. The teachers of the Micronesian Region, including those of Guam and CNMI, do not have access to a single course in English as A Second Language instructional methods. It would be an important

step toward pedagogical effectiveness everywhere in the Region if teacher training institutions would provide one or more such courses as required ingredients in baccaulaureate programs for degrees in education. They should focus to a major extent on oral language development methods, combined with methods which integrate reading and writing with oral language for a "whole language" instructional approach (e.g., Goodman and Goodman, 1979). These need to be fully integrated with coursework in first language literacy and bilingual instructional methods (e.g., Krashen, 1981).

5. Although numerous conferencing and staff development opportunities are offered each year by the inservice education providers of the Micronesian Region, there exists a need for a focused gathering at which the concerns of this paper are addressed. In the Micronesian Region in 1987, the SPC materials are being used in an almost unconscious way, with little self examination about their effectiveness or about options for their placement or their combination with other materials, or what should follow them. Simultaneously, during the last two years, representatives of U.S. textbook publishers have traveled up and down, and back and forth, throughout the Region, developing commitments from local education agencies to pilot test and/or purchase their materials. And, in the teacher training institutions, reading instruction is carried out in an abstract way that is totally blind to the local situations to which the teachers will return. This cortext must be refocused, and the disparate directions of action integrated, if progress is to be made toward effective reading instruction in Micronesian classrooms and adequate teacher training in reading instruction.

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